

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-06 EUR-08 OES-02 ACDA-10
INR-05 CIAE-00 INRE-00 L-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 IO-06
NSAE-00 SP-02 /058 W
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O R 142100Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2724
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7685

LIMDIS

USIAEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE VIEWS ON NUCLEAR MATTERS

REF: VIENNA 8837

1. SUMMARY: ACTING SCIENCE COUNSELOR TALKED AT LENGTH WITH DR. JORGE COLL, SECRETARY GENERAL OF CNEA, ON THE GENERAL NUCLEAR SITUATION ON FRIDAY OCTOBER 14. REAR ADMIRAL CASTRO MADERO, WHO HAD ASKED FOR MEETING, WAS DETAINED AT A CONFERENCE OF ALL GOA ADMIRALS. WHEN CASTRO MADERO FINALLY JOINED THE DISCUSSION, HE HAD VERY LITTLE MORE TO ADD. THEY SAID THAT ARGENTINA IS WILLING IN PRINCIPLE TO ASSUME CO-LEAD ROLE AT INFCE; ARGENTINA WILL PROBABLY ACCEPT FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS; GOA DECISION ON RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO TREATY WILL BE MADE PRIOR TO VISIT TO ARGENTINA BY SECRETARY VANCE; DEFERMENT OF REPROCESSING BY ARGENTINA AND FINDLEY-ARGENTINA-BRAZIL
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NUCLEAR INSPECTION PROPOSAL ARE POLITICALLY UNFEASIBLE;
AND U.S. AUTHORIZATION TO TRANSFER HEU TO PERU IS
DESIRED ONLY FOR ZERO POWER RESEARCH REACTOR. END SUMMARY.

2. INFCE: ARGENTINA IS INTERESTED IN PRINCIPLE IN
ASSUMING CO-LEAD ROLE FOR WORKING GROUPS 1, 3, AND 6.
COLL SAID THAT INITIALLY THEY HAD HAD SOME RESERVATIONS

ABOUT ASSUMING CO-LEAD ROLE BECAUSE ARGENTINA IS NOT MOST ADVANCED COUNTRY IN ANY OF THE TOPICS BEING COVERED BY THE WORKING GROUPS. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT ARGENTINA DOES HAVE SOME GOOD PEOPLE AND SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED ING. JORGE COSENTINO AND ABEL JULIO GONZALEZ AS POSSIBLE ARGENTINE NOMINEES FOR CO-CHAIRMEN POSITIONS.

3. SAFEGUARDS: COLL SAID HE BELIEVES ARGENTINA WILL ACCEPT FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS IN RETURN FOR ASSURANCES THAT ARGENTINA WILL RECEIVE THE NECESSARY TECHNOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM. HE SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED WITH DISGUST THE HISTORY OF ARGENTINE EXPERIENCE WITH THE CANADIANS ON MATTER OF TRANSFER OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. TIME AFTER TIME ARGENTINA WOULD AGREE TO CONDITIONS BEING IMPOSED BY THE CANADIANS ONLY TO FIND THAT NEW MORE RESTRICTIVE CONDITIONS WERE NOW BEING DEMANDED BY THE CANADIANS. THE DELAYS CAUSED EACH TIME BY THESE NEW DEMANDS WERE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ESCALATION OF COSTS OF THE CANDU REACTOR BEING BUILT BY THE CANADIANS IN RIO TERCERO, CORDOBA.

WHILE ARGENTINA CAN UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR SAFEGUARDS ON FISSIONABLE MATERIAL, COLL SAID THAT IT IS NOT LOGICAL TO DEMAND SAFEGUARDS FOR OTHER MATERIALS, SUCH AS HEAVY WATER. HE SAID THAT THE RECENT IAEA MEETING IN VIENNA SHOWED THAT CURRENT SAFEGUARDS PROCEDURES

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ARE EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE AND THEREFORE THERE IS NO NEED TO EXTEND THEM TO NON-FISSIONABLE MATERIALS. MOREOVER, THE COST OF IMPLEMENTING SAFEGUARDS, WHICH IS ALREADY VERY HIGH, WOULD ESCALATE EVEN FURTHER.

4. TLATELOLCO TREATY: COLL SAID THAT THE GOA IS CURRENTLY STUDYING POSSIBILITY OF RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO TREATY AND THAT THE GOA WOULD ARRIVE AT SOME KIND OF DECISION PRIOR TO VISIT OF SECRETARY VANCE TO ARGENTINA. HE INDICATED THAT RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL COST TO THE GOVERNMENT. WHEN ASKED WHERE THE SOURCE OF OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY CAME FROM, COLL SAID THAT PRINCIPALLY FROM LEFTIST ELEMENTS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT, WHO WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TREATY TO ACCUSE THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP OF SELLING OUT THE COUNTRY'S BASIC INTERESTS. CASTRO MADERO ADDED THAT PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7685

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PREPARING GOA POSITION ON TLATELOLCO LIES WITH MFA.
HE ALSO SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY COULD NOT SEE WHY THE
USG WAS SO INTERESTED IN TLATELOLCO BECAUSE THE TREATY
PERMITS NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES --
A TYPE OF NUCLEAR ACTIVITY WHICH COULD EASILY BE
DIVERTED TO NON-PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

5. REPROCESSING: COLL SAID THAT ARGENTINA HAS NO
URGENT NEED TO PROCESS ITS SPENT FUEL FROM ITS COMMER-
CIAL NUCLEAR PLANTS. HOWEVER, ARGENTINA WANTS TO LEARN
REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY AND HAS DECIDED TO CONSTRUCT
PILOT REPROCESSING FACILITIES TO REPROCESS THE FUEL
FROM ITS RESEARCH REACTORS. FOR POLITICAL REASONS, HE
SAID HE WAS QUITE SURE THAT GOA WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY
DEFERMENT OF REPROCESSING FACILITIES. IN PRACTICE,
HOWEVER, COLL SAID THAT EXPERIENCE IN ARGENTINA HAS
SHOWN THAT IT TAKES TWICE AS LONG TO IMPLEMENT ANY
PROJECT THAN ORIGINALLY PLANNED. HE DOUBTED, THEREFORE,
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THAT ARGENTINA WOULD HAVE AN OPERATIONAL REPROCESSING
PLANT FOR AT LEAST FIVE TO SIX YEARS. MOREOVER, COLL
ADDED THAT HE DID NOT SEE ANY NEED FOR DEFERMENT SINCE
THE GOA WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT SAFEGUARDS FOR THE

REPROCESSING FACILITY SINCE IT WOULD BE USING U.S.-ORIGIN FUEL.

6. FINDLEY ARGENTINA-BRAZIL INSPECTION PROPOSAL: COLL SAID THAT A MUTUAL ARGENTINA-BRAZIL NUCLEAR INSPECTION AGREEMENT AS OUTLINED BY CONGRESSMAN FINDLEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE FEASIBLE POLITICALLY. ALTHOUGH COOPERATION ON NUCLEAR MATTERS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS GOOD, BILATERAL PROBLEMS IN OTHER AREAS, AND IN PARTICULAR THOSE CONCERNING THE HYDROELECTRIC DAMS ON THE PARANA RIVER, WOULD STAND IN THE WAY OF SUCH A NUCLEAR AGREEMENT. MOREOVER, AN AGREEMENT OF THAT TYPE COULD BE INTERPRETED BY OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AS THE FIRST STEP IN THE FORMATION OF AN ARGENTINA-BRAZIL AXIS -- A RESULT WHICH THEY WOULD FIND ALARMING.

7. RESEARCH REACTORS FOR PERU: COLL SAID THAT THE GOA ONLY WANTS U.S. AUTHORIZATION TO TRANSFER HEU FOR THE ZERO-POWER RESEARCH REACTOR IT IS LENDING, WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE, TO PERU. PERU ITSELF WILL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OBTAINING THE FUEL FOR THE LARGER RESEARCH REACTOR WHICH ARGENTINA HAS AGREED TO BUILD IN PERU.

8. BILATERAL U.S.-ARGENTINE TALKS ON NUCLEAR MATTERS: CASTRO MADERO AND COLL SAID THEY WERE BOTH LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND HOPED THAT OUTSTANDING BILATERAL ISSUES COULD BE RESOLVED AT THIS
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MEETING. THEY ACCEPTED INVITATION FOR LUNCHEON OCTOBER 18. BEING HOSTED BY AMBASSADOR STEDMAN. THEY DID NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, WHETHER AMBASSADOR ORTIZ DE ROSAS WOULD BE IN WASHINGTON ON THAT DATE. CASTRO MADERO SUGGESTED THAT DEPARTMENT CHECK WITH AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL. HE ALSO REQUESTED THAT EMBASSY BE INFORMED OF THE ROOM IN THE DEPARTMENT WHERE BILATERAL TALKS WILL TAKE PLACE.

9. COMMENT: COLL WAS EXCEEDINGLY FRANK AND CORDIAL IN OUTLINING CNEA'S WHOLE NUCLEAR SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. ASIDE FROM ACCEPTING FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, HE CONVEYED IMPRESSION THAT FLEXIBILITY ON THEIR PART FOR NEGOTIATION IS LIMITED.
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